

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of irradiating a layer including:

directing and focussing a radiation beam to a spot on said layer by means of at least one optical element;

causing relative movement of the layer relative to said at least one optical element so that, successively, different portions of the layer are irradiated and an interspace between a surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said layer is maintained; and

maintaining ~~at least a portion of~~ said interspace through which said radiation irradiates said spot on said layer filled with a liquid, the liquid being supplied via a supply conduit;

characterized in that at least a portion of said interspace is bounded by a recess which is filled by at least a ~~portion of said liquid, fills up a recess through which said~~ radiation ~~irradiates beam passing through said liquid in said~~ recess when irradiating said spot, wherein said recess is bounded by a passage in a wall between said layer and a surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said layer and by said at least one optical element nearest to said layer, said radiation ~~beam passing through said passage.~~

2. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The method according to as claimed in~~
claim 1, wherein the recess has a rim portion positioned between
said surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said
layer and said layer, closest to said layer and extending around
said radiation beam irradiating said spot.

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The method according to as claimed in~~
claim ~~31~~, wherein a liquid outflow from said recess via said
passage is maintained.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The method according to as claimed in~~
claim 1, wherein a smallest thickness of said interspace is
maintained of 3-1500 μm .

6. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The method according to as claimed in~~
claim 1, wherein said recess includes a concave portion of said
surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said layer.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The method according to as claimed in~~
claim 1, wherein the liquid flows out from at least one outflow
opening in said recess in the form of at least one canal open
towards said layer, said canal distributing supplied liquid
longitudinally along said canal and dispensing distributed liquid
towards said layer.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~A method according to claim 1A~~ method of irradiating a layer including:

~~directing and focussing a radiation beam to a spot on said layer by means of at least one optical element;~~

~~causing relative movement of the layer relative to said at least one optical element so that, successively, different portions of the layer are irradiated and an interspace between a surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said layer is maintained; and~~

~~maintaining at least a portion of said interspace through which said radiation irradiates said spot on said layer filled with a liquid, the liquid being supplied via a supply conduit;~~

~~characterized in that at least a portion of said liquid fills up a recess through which said radiation irradiates said spot,~~

wherein said interspace between said layer and said surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said layer has a thickness H , the layer and the at least one optical element are moved relative to each other at a velocity V , the liquid is supplied via an outflow opening having a width W measured in a plane parallel to said layer and at a flow rate equal to $0.5 \cdot H \cdot (W + \cdot H) \cdot V$, where \cdot is a constant between 1 and 10 and \cdot is a constant between 1 and 3.

9. (Currently Amended) A device for directing radiation to a layer including:

at least one optical element for focussing radiation originating from said radiation source to a spot on said layer;

a displacement structure for causing relative movement of the layer relative to said at least one optical element so that, successively, different portions of the layer are irradiated and an interspace between said layer and a surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said spot is maintained; and

an outflow opening for supplying liquid to ~~fill at least a portion of said interspace through which~~, in operation, said radiation irradiates said spot on said layer, ~~through said liquid.~~

~~characterized by in that said device further comprises a recess in a surface facing said spot, having an internal surface of said recess bounding at least said portion of said interspace through which said radiation irradiates said spot, said outflow opening being formed in said recess, wherein said recess is bounded by a passage in a wall between said spot and a surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said spot and by said surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said spot, said passage forming said outflow opening.~~

10. (Currently Amended) ~~A. The device according to~~ claim 9, wherein said recess has a rim portion closest to said layer extending around said portion of said interspace through which, in operation, said radiation irradiates said spot.

11. (Cancelled).

12. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The device according to~~as claimed in
claim 11~~2~~, wherein said device further including-comprises a liquid
supply structure communicating with said ~~passage-recess~~ for
maintaining a liquid outflow via said passage.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The device according to~~as claimed in
claim 9, wherein said device is arranged for maintaining a smallest
thickness of said interspace of ~~3-3~~1500 μm .

14. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The device according to~~as claimed in
claim 9, wherein said recess includes a concave portion of said
surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said spot.

15. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The device according to~~as claimed in
claim 9, wherein the at least one outflow opening is formed by at
least one canal open towards said layer, for distributing supplied
liquid longitudinally along said canal and dispensing distributed
liquid towards said layer.